

129 I am using the concept "medicine" in the sense used by the Pangwe /Ed., the author uses Pangwe [Fang] as the name for a group of tribes in which the Fang are one tribe; the others are the Eton, Mwele [Mvele], Jaunde [Yaunde], Bene [Bane], Bulu, Ntum, Mwai [Mvae], and Mokuk (Oschüeba)/, who have a much broader conception of it than we do and unite under the term biāñ, "medicine," various things which we are accustomed to separate, namely, charms, means for bringing luck and avoiding misfortune, remedies for cult sicknesses, and healing remedies in our sense of the term. In addition, I shall include the food taboos (eki).

759 The knowledge of medicines is fairly widespread among the Pangwe. Each Pangwe man -- and /144/ even each Pangwe woman -- is familiar with half a dozen or at least a few. However, only a person who is an extraordinarily good observer, who does not stay at home as does the average Pangwe, and who has gained experience and knowledge is designated as a medicine man, ngěngǎñ I. As was observed in an earlier section /Ed., Vol. I, Section 8/, extreme specialization of all knowledge and skills is found among the Pangwe. This is no less the case with medicines. One man may be familiar with cult medicines, another with ewu medicines; others specialize in the opening of corpses for the detection of ewu, still others specialize in skin diseases, etc. Within these areas specialization goes still farther. Individual medicine men may be specialists for a particular disease (e.g., leprosy) or for a particular method of treating this disease. Such a specialist is called ongěngǎñ. He is frequently sought from a great distance by patients who do not have a specialist for their case or one of sufficient repute in their own villages.

424 Medical knowledge is not guarded as a legacy in certain families, but is the property of individuals and is imparted to others by the expert in return for cash payment. This is a business deal of such great importance that a father seldom or never instructs his own son in medical knowledge, as he could not accept much payment from him -- particularly since it is in a sense a matter of his own money -- and he would not do it for nothing

424 because, in spite of the great love for children, in spite of the
759 intimate relationship between father and son, the Negro is simply
461 not able to endure the effort of working unless the prospect of
[435] payment is constantly before his eyes. The price for strangers,
to be paid in advance, is 100 spears or a small sheep, in return
for which the medicine man will teach his pupil all the cures
that he knows.

The medicine men do not have any special social status,
759 authority, or influence. In general, they are regarded only as
554 experienced and skillful persons (akō'n, i.e., "skillful"). Only
754 those among them who know the medicines of sorcery and give
this knowledge to others (including the cult leaders who, by
means of a magic medicine, give the cult figures the power to
practice sorcery) are feared, and rightly so, because one suspects
that with the help of these "medicines" they may practice sorcery,
i.e., kill other people, at any time.

1. Medicines for Sorcery

754 We have seen in the previous chapter /Ed., not translated/
[753] that the sources of belief in sorcery are to be sought in the need
to assign causes for unrecognized internal ailments, particularly
malaria and poisoning. Because of the similarity of their symp-
toms, these two cannot be distinguished by European outsiders, /145/
and even the native inhabitants for the most part find it impossible.
At the moment, therefore, it is not possible to obtain a clear
picture of these things. It is certain that the Negroes know how to
get someone out of the way with poison and that they mix poison
with the conscious intention of killing, but it is uncertain to what
extent they are conscious of the physiological effects of poison in
our sense. As far as I could observe, a generally mystical view of
these matters still prevails. All poisoning, just like all internal
illness, is sorcery, and all sorcery is the mystical operation of the
physical being, detached from the body, that finds its strength
in its ewu which has been developed through medicine (see Sec-
tion 12) /Ed., not translated/. If someone wishes to kill a person

791 suggest those of the sorcerers they were fighting, as do some of their procedures. Like them, /high initiates/ were capable of telekinesis and bilocation, etc. Trilles gives numerous examples, some of which he claims to have observed himself. Like /sorcerers, initiates/ could transform themselves into animals or make use of a dedicated animal, élañela. They killed people from a distance, especially by casting a spell on a token /temoin, "witness"/ of the classical type, or by acting directly upon people with their power, ngul, by forcing them to submit to their will. Like sorcerers, also, they could be victims through repercussion.

Considering the circumstances, it is not surprising that /121/ magicians and sorcerers have often been confused, nor that some magicians have been led into making evil use of their knowledge, nor, 754 finally, that contemporary associations, like the mbuti (bwiti), intended to combat sorcery, have borrowed its methods, even in their criminal aspects.

533 In addition to the magicians proper, there is the singer, ñyia bia, 789 who plays an important role in all rites, including initiations. Every important rite and ceremony has its musical accompaniment, with a specific orchestra for the occasion, and a choirmaster, who leads the incantations and acts somewhat as a master of ceremonies, without himself participating directly in the sacrifice or the magical act. It is peculiar to the ñyia bia that he is present at the three major rites, sô, ngil, and ndongo, as at all magic ceremonies, no matter what his affiliation; apparently he is not liable to the prohibitions concerning participation affecting zese bô, ordinary or profane people. He 424 buys and sells or inherits his songs, is not assigned to a caste /n'est pas caste/, yet seems to have enjoyed a certain immunity during the wars of former times, but this may only have been the case with the most celebrated of the beyia bia. There are also female beyia bia, who enjoy the same prerogatives in feminine rites.

778 Magical equipment consists, first, of the instruments appropriate 789 to each rite, drums, horns, rattles, bells, the ngoma harp of the 534 bwiti, etc., with a great variety of additional diverse objects: fly-whisks, akpwassa, sometimes mutilated; antelope horns filled with mebiati; human and animal skulls and bones; pots and calabashes; engraved and decorated magician's spears; masks; the bwiti broken mirror; bikpwéle (iron "bride-price money"); shells, etc. Every magical act, every rite, has its own properties, the complete description of which would require a separate monograph for each. We